

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 12069

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: CUBAN EFFORT IN ANGOLA

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 293297

1. SUMMARY. LA'S TEND TO SEE THE ANGOLAN SITUATION AS A "BIG POWER" CONFLICT THEY CANNOT AFFECT AND THEREFORE SHOULD STAY OUT OF. UNTIL THEY SEE IN THE CUBAN/ SOVIET EFFORT RAMIFICATIONS AFFECTING THEIR OWN INTERESTS OR SECURITY THEY WILL NOT BECOME GREATLY CONCERNED. OUR CAPACITY TO AROUSE THEIR CONCERN IS WEAKENED BY PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF OUR OWN INVOLVEMENT, OF OUR OWN CONGRESSIONAL DEBATES ON THSTSUBJECT AND OF EVIDENCE OF INTERVENTION BY A NUMBER OF OTHER POWERS AS WELL. WHAT WE NEED TO ASK NOW, THEREFORE, IS WHAT QUESTIONS OUGHT THE LATINS TO BE ASKING THEMSELVES AND ARE THEY? WHAT WE CAN REASONABLY HOPE TO ACHIEVE IS A GROWING CAUTION AND SKEPTICISM ON THE PART OF LATIN AMERICA ABOUT CUBA, THE SOVIETS AND THEIR INTENTIONS.

OUR STRATEGY THEREFORE OUGHT TO BE TO CONTINUE THE PUBLIC RECTGL OF CONDEMNING THE CUBAN-SOVIET ACITIVITY ESPECIALLY IN THE UN; TO MAKE A DETERMINED
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EFFORT TO DISSEMINATE THE FACTS SO THEY CAN SPEAK FOR

THEMSELVES; AND TO UNDERTAKE SOPHISTICATED, SELECTIVE CONSULTATIONS DESIGNED TO POSE QUESTIONS THE LA'S OUGHT TO ASK AND THUS BEGIN A PROCESS OF ANALYSIS WHOSE OWN RESULTS WILL SUGGEST WHAT OTHER MEASURES MAY PROVE DESIRABLE. TO DO THIS, WE WILL HAVE TO SORT OUT OUR OWN THOUGHTS AS TO WHAT THE CUBAN/SOVIET EFFORT REALLY DOES MEAN FOR THE HEMISPHERE, FOR THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM AND FOR OUR OWN SECURITY. END SUMMARY.

2. PERHAPS THE LA'S OUGHT TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE CUBAN EFFORT IN ANGOLA, BUT MY IMPRESSION IS THAT THEY ARE NOT. THE REPREHENSIBILITY OF THE CUBAN/SOVIET ACTION IS WEAKENED BY THE EVIDENCE OF OTHER NATIONS INTERVENTION AS WELL. OUR OWN CAPACITY TO BRING THE ISSUE TO THEIR ATTENTION IN THIS SENSE IS LIMITED BECAUSE THE TABLES CAN INDEED BE TURNED AGAINST US EASILY, NOT ONLY WITH REFERENCE TO THE PAST RECORD BUT WITH REFERENCE TO PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF CURRENT US INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA. THE CURRENT US CONGRESSIONAL CONTROVERSY WHICH HAS JUST HIT THE HEADLINES (SENATOR CHURCH'S STATEMENT FOR EXAMPLE) IS NOT LOST SIGHT OF HERE, AND THE OLD QUESTION OF WHOSE INTERVENTION IS RESPONDING TO WHOSE IS BEGINNING TO BE ASKED.

3. THUS I SUSPECT MOST LA'S TEND TO VIEW THE ANGOLAN PROBLEM AS A "BIG POWER" SQUABBLE THEY CANNOT AFFECT AND HENCE OUGHT TO STAY OUT OF. (THIS TENDS TO BE COLOMBIA'S VIEW. WHEN I CALLED THE ANGOLAN SITUATION TO LIEVANO'S ATTENTION IN MID-NOVEMBER HIS ONLY REACTION WAS THAT WHAT WAS BAD ABOUT CUBA'S ACTION WAS THAT IT WOULD PROVOKE AN ESCALATION OF THE "OTHER SIDE'S" INVOLVEMENT.) SINCE THE ANGOLAN SITUATION INVOLVES THE "THIRD WORLD" AND HAS "COLONIALIST" ROOTS THERE IS PROBABLY AN ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDING RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF MANY LA'S TO TAKE SIDES OR GET INVOLVED AND CONSEQUENTLY A TEMPTATION TO RATIONALIZE IT AS A SUI GENERIS SITUATION THAT HAS NO NECESSARY RELATION TO THE HEMISPHERE.

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4. IN SUM, THE LA'S ARE NOT LIKELY TO REACT TO THE ANGOLAN SITUATION SO LONG AS THEY SEE IT AS A GLOBAL PROBLEM INVOLVING THE BIG POWERS, DETENTE, ETC. UNTIL AND UNLESS THEY FOCUS ON THE CUBAN/SOVIET INTERVENTION FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND DRAW ANY CONCLUSIONS AS REGARDS THE RAMIFICATIONS FOR THEMSELVES AND THE HEMISPHERE, THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO BECOME CONCERNED ABOUT IT OR BE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING.

5. WHAT WE NEED TO ASK NOW, THEREFORE, AS I SEE IT,
IS WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE WANT THE LATINS TO ASK THEMSELVES
ABOUT THE CUBAN EFFORT AND ARE THEY DOING IT? NOTE THAT
I THINK WE CAN ONLY POSE THE QUESTIONS (AND THUS
THE NEED FOR ANALYSIS); WE CANNOT ANSWER THEM FOR THEM. WHILE
I AM LESS CONVINCED THAN HARRY THAT THE LATINS SO EASILY
DISMISS THE CUBAN ROLE BECAUSE IT IS SURROGATE, I DO
BELIEVE THAT THE CONCLUSION THAT "IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE"
IS OVERWHELMINGLY TEMPTING BECAUSE IT IS SO CONGENIAL AND
UNALARMING. THE TEMPTATION TO RATIONALIZATION IS THUS
GREAT. COLD ANALYSIS AND PROBING THE "UNTHINKABLE"
ARE NOT LIKELY TO GENERATE SPONTANEOUSLY. HENCE
THE REGION MAY FAIL TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS THAT
OUGHT TO BE ASKED: WHAT AFTER ALL ARE CUBAN MOTIVES,
IDEOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATIONS AND LONG-RANGE INTENTIONS?
WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE IN THE ACTUAL DEMONSTRATION OF
SOVIET/CUBAN CAPACITY PHYSICALLY TO PROJECT MILITARY
POWER OVER LONG DISTANCES WHEN THEY THINK IT IN THEIR
INTEREST TO DO SO? WHAT SIGNIFICANCE IS THERE IN THE
SOVIETS CAPACITY TO PERSUADE OR FORCE CUBAN PARTICIPATION
IN SUCH ADVENTURES? IF SOVIET OR CUBAN INTENTIONS TOWARD
LA APPEAR BENIGN NOW ARE THEY LIKELY TO BE SO ALWAYS?
WHAT SITUATIONS, CIRCUMSTANCES OR ARRANGEMENTS WOULD
RESTRAIN THEM?

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6. WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE, IN SHORT, IS A GROWING CAUTION AND SKEPTICISM ON THE PART OF LATIN AMERICA AS REGARDS CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION AND THEIR INTENTIONS, AND AS REGARDS THEIR OWN SECURITY. I DO NOT THINK THAT FOR THE MOMENT WE CAN ACHIEVE MUCH MORE; I DO NOT THINK WE CAN ORGANIZE A LATIN AMERICAN REACTION OR CONVINCE THE REGION THAT A NEW SUDDEN EXTERNAL THREAT EXISTS--AT LEAST NOT UNTIL THEY HAVE ASKED AND ANSWERED THEMSELVES THE NECESSARY QUESTIONS.

7. HENCE I BELIEVE THAT FOR THE PRESENT OUR STRATEGY OUGHT TO BE THREEFOLD; A) CONTINUE OUR PUBLIC POSITION--ESPECIALLY IN THE UN--CONDEMNING THE INTERVENTION--NOT IN THE EXPECTATION THAT OTHERS WILL NECESSARILY SUDDENLY RALLY TO US, BUT TO GO ON RECORD AND TO CONDEMN IT BECAUSE WE THINK IT WRONG. THIS IS ALSO USEFUL IN REDUCING CUBAN "RESPECTABILITY"; NOTE ALSO THE SUGGESTION BY A GOC FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL THAT UNGA ATTENTION TO THE MATTER COULD WELL "FREEZE" RECOGNITIONS OF THE MPLA AND DISCOURAGE OTHER NATIONS FROM RECOGNIZING (PARA 3, BOGOTA 10976). B) MAKE A SYSTEMATIC EFFORT TO PUBLICIZE AND DISSEMINATE THE FACTS (WITH LOCAL PLACEMENT, ETC.) SO THAT THESE CAN SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. THE FACTS, AND THE CONSEQUENT IMAGE, HAVE A DISQUIETING EFFECT ALL BY THEMSELVES AND WE SHOULD ALLOW THAT TO OPERATE. C) INITIATE A SELECTIVE, QUIET AND SOPHISTICATED CONSULTATWXN WITH KEY LA MZTIONS DESIGNED TO POSE QUESTIONS

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WE ALL SHOULD ASK OURSELVES AND POINTS OF ANALYSIS THAT NEED TO BE PROBED; IN SHORT, TO START A PROCESS OF ANALYSIS WHOSE OWN RESULTS WILL SUGGEST WHAT OTHER PROGRAMMATIC MEASURES MAY PROVE DESIRABLE.

8. IN THIS CONNECTION I HAVE A NAGGING FEELING THAT WE HAVE NOT SORTED OUT OUR OWN THOUGHTS ABOUT WHAT ANGOLA MEANS FOR THE HEMISPHERE. FOR US TO PERSUADE THE LATINS TO ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS, WE HAVE TO HAVE SOME IDEA OF WHAT THE RIGHT QUESTIONS ARE. IN SHORT, DOES THE CUBAN/SOVIET EFFORT HAVE IN FACT ANY REAL MEANING FOR THE HEMISPHERE? IT DOES SEEM TO ME THAT THE CUBAN EFFORT AND THE SOVIET INSPIRATION AND USE OF IT DEMONSTRATE THE PHYSICAL CAPACITY OF THE CUBANS/SOVIETS TO PROJECT MILITARY POWER OVER LONG DISTANCES, THUS MAKING CONCRETE WHAT HAS UP TO NOW BEEN A THEORETICAL POTENTIAL. SECONDLY, IT INDICATES THE ABILITY OF THE SOVIETS TO UTILIZE CUBAN POWER, VOLUNTARILY OR UNDER DURESS, IN THE SERVICE OF ITS OWN "GREAT POWER" INTERESTS, AND IT DEMONSTRATES HOW FAR BOTH WILL GO WHEN THEY THINK IT IN THEIR INTEREST TO DO SO AND JUDGE THE ODDS FAVORABLY. ARE THESE QUALITATIVELY NEW FACTORS IN THE HEMISPHERE SITUATION AND IN LONG-TERM SECURITY

PROSPECTS? PROJECTED OVER A LONG PERIOD, WHAT WILL
RESTRAIN THE SOVIETS/CUBANS, AND WHAT IF DETENTE FAILS?
DOES THE RECEDING OF AMERICAN POWER PLAY ANY ROLE?
BECAUSE SOVIET INTERVENTION IN LATIN AMERICA-OR CUBA-
SEEMS INCONCEIVABLE UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES
WILL IT ALWAYS BE SO? IS IT TOO FAR OUT FOR EXAMPLE
TO EVER ENVISAGE BELIZE AS ANOTHER KIND OF ANGOLA?
SHOULD ONE SIMPLY COUNT ON THE BENIGNITY OF A POWER
LIKE THE SOVIETS AS PROTECTION?

9. IN SHORT WE NEED OURSELVES PRECISE AND CAREFUL
ANALYSIS OF THE HEMISPHERE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE
CUBAN EFFORT IN ANGOLA, ITS MOTIVES AND ITS MEANING,
AS A BASIS FOR LOOKING JOINTLY AT THE FUTURE WITH LATIN
AMERICA AND AS A BASIS FOR CONSULTATIONS. AND THIS KIND
OF ANALYSIS ALSO SEEMS MOST RELEVANT TO ME PRECISELY NOW
WHEN WE ARE GRAPPLING WITH THE QUESTION OF WHAT WE SHOULD
DO ABOUT THE OAS AND THE "SYSTEM". WE HAVE BEEN FREELY SAYING
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UP TO NOW THAT THERE IS NO REAL SECURITY RATIONALE FOR THE
INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM AS REGARDS INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL
HEMISPHERE THREATS. IS THAT REALLY RIGHT?
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